

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 HA-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 /104 W

-----119285 262221Z /75

R 251615Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1591

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LOME

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 2349

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CG, FR, BE, US, SG, MO, IV, GB, TO, GW, UK

SUBJECT: PARIS MEETING ON PAN AFRICAN FORCE

REF: STATE 211443

1. LACKING STATE 203722, WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHAT DEPARTMENT WANTS IN PARA 7 REFTEL. SITUATION HERE, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO US TO BE FOLLOWING:

A. THERE NO APPARENT PRESSURES TO RETURN GABONESE CONTINGENT. ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF TOLD US AUG 22 THAT PRESENT CONTINGENT WILL BE REPLACED AFTER THREE MONTHS' SERVICE IN SEPTEMBER, AS REPORTED EARLIER IN PRESS (LIBREVILLE 2228, NOTAL). HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT GOG WOULD EXPECT ROTATION BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MEANS OTHER THAN THEIR OWN. INDEED, WITH ONLY 45-MAN FORCE, IT WELL  
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WITHIN GABONESE AIR TRANSPORT CAPABILITY TO REPLACE PRESENT CONTINGENT WITHOUT OUTSIDE AID.

B. TENOR OF CHIEF OF STAFF'S REMARKS AND OF PRESS ACCOUNT, SUGGESTS STRONGLY TO US THAT GABONESE MILITARY VIEW SHABA AS MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT TRAINING EXERCISE WHILE TROOPS ARE PERFORMING IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF HELPING OUT MOBUTU. EVEN THOUGH GABON HAS SMALL MILITARY,

TEMPORARY LOSS OF ONLY 45 MEN HAS MEANT VIRTUALLY NO LOSS IN GABON'S SECURITY CAPABILITY. FACT THAT CONTINGENT WAS LEFT UNDISTURBED DURING RECENT TROUBLE WITH BENINESE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

C. IN TIME, SOME GABONESE MAY GET ITCHY TO BRING TROOPS HOME, BUT ROTATION OF TROOPS WILL EASE THIS PROBLEM. MEANWHILE, WE BELIEVE BONGO WILL BE DISPOSED TO LEAVE HIS CONTINGENT IN SHABA AS LONG AS HE PERCEIVES THAT HIS FRIEND MOBUTU HAS NEED FOR THEM IN ADDITION, HE NO DOUBT SEES GABONESE CONTINGENT AS BEING IMPORTANT AFRICAN CONTRIBUTION TO RESOLVING AFRICAN PROBLEM, AND THUS A MATTER OF NATIONAL PRIDE. HE WILL NOT WANT TO BE THE FIRST TO BREAK RANKS.

D. WHEN TIME ARRIVE TO COME HOME, GABON COULD RETRIEVE ITS TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT ON ITS OWN AND BEAR THE EXPENSE OF DOING SO. WHETHER THEY WOULD THEN REMEMBER HOW TROOPS GOT THERE IN FIRST PLACE AND ASK US OR FRENCH TO DO HONORS, WE CANNOT NOW SAY. BONGO IS QUITE CAPABLE OF DOING SO, PARTICULARLY IF OTHER AFRICANS RETURN HOME ABOARD FOREIGN AIRCRAFT, BUT IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT HE WOULD. SAME GOES FOR RE-SUPPLY. GABON IS CAPABLE OF RE-SUPPLYING ITS OWN CONTINGENT, BUT MIGHT WELL WANT IN ON ACT IF OTHER CONTINGENTS WERE BEING HELPED FROM OUTSIDE.

2. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, GABON LIKELY BE FOLLOWER  
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RATHER THAN LEADER IN ANY DISCUSSIONS. GABONESE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY GO TO CONFERENCE EITHER IN PARIS OR SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA HAT IN HAND, BUT THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO BE LEFT OUT IF THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SHARED. FROM OUR OWN POINT OF VIEW, IT SEEMS IMPERATIVE THAT WE GET OUR DUCKS IN ROW WITH EUROPEANS BEFORE AFRICANS BECOME INVOLVED, HOWEVER. PROCESS SHOULD INCLUDE DETERMINATION OF JUST WHAT WE ARE OR ARE NOT WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE BEFORE WE MEET WITH AFRICANS. WE NOTE DEPARTMENT'S SEEMING RELUCTANCE MAKE COMMITMENTS, BUT WE BELIEVE IT UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT AFRICANS WILL NOT EXPECT CONTRIBUTION FROM USG, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRY TO PORTRAY ANY EFFORT AS BEING FRENCH SHOW. FRENCH PLAYED VIRTUALLY NO ROLE WHATSOEVER HERE IN GETTING GABONESE TO SHABA, AND WHILE GABONESE WOULD BE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO HAVE FRENCH HELP NOW IF OFFERED, THEY WILL STILL WANT TO KNOW EHRE WE STAND.

3. ONCE IN ACCORD WITH OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS, WE COULD THEN AS A GROUP MEET WITH AFRICANS, PREFERABLY SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA. TIMING, HOWEVER, SHOULD BE DETERMINED BY PERCEIVED NEED TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS WITH

COUNTRIES LIKE MOROCCO, SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST, BUT NOT GABON, WHICH APPEARS TO US TO BE QUITE RELAXED AND READY ACCEPT LONG HAUL IF NECESSARY. GABONESE, IN SHORT, COULD PROBABLY DO WITHOUT MEETING FOR NOW, BUT IF THERE IS ONE, GABONESE WILL CERTAINLY WANT TO PARTICIPATE AND TO BE INCLUDED IN IF GOODIES ARE BEING PASSED OUT. GABONESE EXPENSE THUS FAR, INCIDENTALLY, HAS PROBABLY BEEN MINIMAL. GABONESE CONTINGENT MAY HAVE RECEIVED FUNDS FOR OWN SUBSISTENCE DURING VISIT OF GENERAL BA OUMAR (LIBREVILLE 2228), OR THEY MAY BE RECEIVING SUBSISTENCE FROM MOROCCANS, IN WHICH CASE THEY WOULD PROBABLY LET MOROCCANS TALK FOR THEM ON THIS SUBJECT. IF, HOWEVER, THE SUBSISTING ON OWN, COST UNLIKELY BE MORE THAN WHAT IT WOULD BE HERE, AN  
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INDEED, GIVEN COST OF LIVING IN LIBREVILLE, MIGHT EVEN BE LESS. TIENKEN

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## Message Attributes

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